

Religion, Mysticism and the Myth of the "Occult Reich"

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There's nothing quite like the sensationalism of combining Nazism with black magic to ensure attention for an author. Since Hitler's National Socialism has been regarded as "the ultimate in evil," linking Hitlerism with black magic and Satanism is a logical development. It could be contended that the sensationalism of the dime novel, pop history, and Hollywood in portraying Hitler as having sold his soul to Mephistopheles, Faustus-style, is a piece of historical grotesquerie for which supposedly serious scholars must be ultimately held responsible.

Much of this can be traced to a piece of wartime propaganda, *Hitler Speaks*, by Hermann Rauschning, who claimed to be one of Hitler's "inner circle." In this book there are many references to Hitler's dealing with black magic and dark powers, and to the presence of an early NSDAP member, Marthe Kuntzel, who was also both a theosophist and a leading German follower of the British occultist Aleister Crowley.^[1] Rauschning was taken seriously by historians until quite recently. Mark Weber writes that in 1983 a Swiss historian exposed the hoax:

Haenel was able to conclusively establish that Rauschning's claim to have met with Hitler "more than a hundred times" is a lie. The two actually met only four times, and never alone. The words attributed to Hitler, he showed, were simply invented or lifted from many different sources, including writings by Juenger and Friedrich Nietzsche. An account of Hitler hearing voices, waking at night with convulsive shrieks and pointing in terror at an empty corner while shouting "There, there, in the corner!" was taken from a short story by French writer Guy de Maupassant.^[2]

Hence, the proliferation of pop-history works trying to prove a link between the Third Reich and the occult, such as *The Morning of the Magicians*,^[3] *The Occult Reich*,^[4] *Satan and Swastika*,^[5] and *The Spear of Destiny*.^[6] One can generally make any allegations about "Nazism," "Fascism" or the "Right" without being challenged. Entertainment has also increasingly drawn on this imaginative pop-history in television series such as "True Blood"^[7], where the German post-war underground, the "Werewolves,"^[8] are depicted as being actual lycanthropes. There is also something of a self-fulfilling prophesy about it insofar as there have been post-war attempts to portray National Socialism and the Third Reich as manifestations of some type of occult force.^[9] Included in this is the more sober attempt by the Chilean diplomat Miguel Serrano, whose "esoteric Hitlerism" included the worship of Lucifer, as a god of light, and of Shiva as the equivalent of Wotan,^[10] and of the "esoteric Hitlerism" of the Greek convert to Hinduism, Savitri Devi.^[11] Somewhat comic-opera attempts at a Nazi-Gothic-Satanist synthesis focus mainly on Radio Werewolf/Werewolf Order and elements of the Church of Satan, on the assumption that National Socialism and Satanism share a common doctrine of misanthropy and elitism.^[12]

One of the few scholarly efforts to trace connections between the occult and the National Socialist party is the late Dr. Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke's *Occult Roots of Nazism*.^[13] Goodrick-Clarke, while establishing a very indirect link between pre-World War I "Ariosophy" and the National Socialist party, rejects the exaggerations that have linked Ariosophy, the Thule Society, the *Vril* Society, et al to the rise of Hitler. For example he states that Dietrich Eckart, Hitler's early mentor, and Alfred Rosenberg, were "never more than guests of Thule during its heyday," while the geopolitical theorist Karl Haushofer, did not

have any link to the society, despite much fantasy being woven around these individuals and their alleged occult links.^[14] The influence of Lanz von Liebenfels and his Ordo Novi Templi in pre-World War I Austro-Hungary on the young Hitler and subsequently on the Third Reich is also put into context, Goodrick-Clarke pointing out that the Order was dissolved by the Nazis and Lanz was prohibited from publishing with the advent of the Third Reich.^[15]

It should be kept in mind that Hitler's views were rather prevalent in Central Europe in his youth and his ideas in *Mein Kampf* are not original but came from a widespread intellectual milieu, of which the Lanz movement was one manifestation.

Another was the Wotenist and runic mysticism of Guido Von List, likewise without influence on Hitler. While Rudolf von Sebottendorff, founder of the Thule Society, was influenced by both Lanz and von List, the influence of Thule on the foundation of the NSDAP has been exaggerated. Sebottendorff was gone from the scene by 1919. "There no evidence Hitler ever attended the Thule Society," states Goodrick-Clarke, "and such theorists were increasingly marginalized well before the party assumed power." Furthermore, occult societies were prohibited in the Third Reich, including those with a racial foundation.^[16]



Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler (1938)

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Karl Maria Wiligut: The Secret King

As far as the English language goes, apart from Goodrick-Clarke's *Occult Roots of Nazism*, the only other credible book on the subject seems to be *The Secret King: Karl Maria Wiligut: Himmler's Lord of the Runes*.^[17] The advantage of this book is that it is a collection of what is by-lined as "the real documents of Nazi occultism," and lets those documents largely speak for themselves.

Michael Moynihan, the editor, in the preface comments:

A veritable cottage industry exists for lurid books on "Nazi Occultism," but few people have had the opportunity to assess real source documents of this nature – and it is clear that most of the authors of the pulp histories certainly made no effort to do so!

Along with the fantastical tales of Nazis and the Occult, claims are often made regarding the "pagan" agenda of the Third Reich, especially in regard to Himmler's SS organization. If one investigates the writings of prominent National Socialist ideologues such as Alfred Rosenberg, however, a far more ambiguous picture emerges of the state-sanctioned religiosity of the time.^[18]

Moynihan alludes to the neo-pagan festivals of the SS compiled into a book by Friz Weitzl in 1939, *Die Gestaltung der Feste im Jahres- und Lebenslauf in der SS-Familie (The Structuring of Festivals during the Year and Life of the SS-Family)*.^[19] Moynihan states that this was issued as a small print run and can therefore be assumed to have reflected the view of a "minority" within the SS.^[20]

Himmler was one of those who promoted a neo-pagan outlook. Under his patronage the most enduring occult influence on an aspect of the Third Reich was Karl Maria Wiligut, the runic mystic who advised Himmler on the redesign of Wewelsburg Castle as the SS "center of the world."^[21] If Wiligut had a certain influence within the SS, he was also met with influential opposition, meaning that the SS, like all other departments and divisions of the NSDAP and the Third Reich administration, were not as monolithic as popularly supposed. Wiligut and other esoteric runologists were opposed in particular by the *Ahnenerbe*, a scholarly research division of the SS,^[22] itself often the center of pop-history fantasies about occultism.

Dr. Stephen Flowers provides an introductory biography on Wiligut without ideologically driven interpretations. Born in 1866, Wiligut wrote his first book, *Seyfrieds Runen* in 1903 when he was a captain in the Austrian army. The book is an epic poem on the legend of King Seyfried of Rabenstein. In 1908 Wiligut wrote "The Nine Commandments of Gôt" for the first time since the book-burnings of Ludwig the Pious." He was also at the time associated with several initiates of Lanz von Liebenfels' Ordo Novi Templi. However Wiligut's active interest in the occult can be traced to 1889 when he joined what Flowers calls the "quasi-Masonic lodge" *Schlarraffia*, which did not have a *völkische* connection. Wiligut resigned from the lodge in 1909, perhaps as a result of the rivalry existing between Masonry and the *völkische* occult.^[23]

This was a time when there was much interest in the occult revival in Europe and Britain. The Theosophical Society was founded during the 1870s, with the catchcry of "universal brotherhood,"^[24] despite the way its doctrine on "root traces" has been claimed as an inspiration for National Socialist and other *völkische* movements. The neo-Rosicrucian "Order of the Golden Dawn" in Britain was an influential organization in the occult revival that included W.B. Yeats and his antagonist Aleister Crowley. The Ordo Templi Orientis was founded in Germany by Theodor Reuss, who appeared

to have been a German intelligence agent, and reached England, where Aleister Crowley, who appears to have been a British intelligence operative when in the USA, [25] had assumed leadership. There was also Fraternis Saturni, which followed Crowley's religion of "Thelema" without following Crowley the person, whose doctrine Flowers has also documented. [26] Guido von List's rune-mysticism in Austria was an important element in the *völkische* movement, and was allied with Von Liebenfels. There is no evidence that Hitler had any association with any of these orders beyond reading von Liebenfels's journal *Ostara*, the focus of which was a dualistic battle between the Satanic Jews and the Godly Aryans. [27]

Wiligut, serving on the Russian front with distinction during World War I, rose to the rank of colonel. With his retirement from the army, he was cultivated for support by the New Templars. Von Liebenfels's agent, Theodor Czepl, reported that Wiligut considered himself the "secret King of Germany," from a family tradition as heir of the *Ueiskuning*, or "holy clan." He believed that the Bible had originated in Germany and had been intentionally distorted. Wiligut gave to Czepl a poem entitled *Deutscher Gottesglaube* ("German Faith in God"), which was said to contain the "whole essence and doctrine of Irminic Christianity." [28] In the 1920s Wiligut edited a journal, *Der eiserne Besen* ("The Iron Broom") attacking Jews, Freemasons and Catholics. [29] In 1924, with hard times and strain between himself and his wife after the death of their infant son, Wiligut was forcibly taken by ambulance to an insane asylum while sitting at a cafe with friends, having been committed by his wife. Interestingly, after a year, his continued confinement was noted by the asylum authorities as being due to his religious ideas, and his tracing his descent back to Wodan. (It seems however that he merely claimed descent from a chieftain named Wodan). He was nonetheless able to maintain contact with friends in the New Templars and the Edda Society. [30] Wiligut's religious beliefs were not that out of kilter with large sections of Austrian and German society at the time, including those of many prominent individuals, as Goodrick-Clarke shows.

In 1932 Frieda Dorenberg, a member of the German Workers' Party prior to Hitler and a member of the Edda Society, visited Wiligut. She and other Edda members "smuggled" Wiligut into Munich, where he taught for an esoteric group, Free Sons of the North and Baltic Seas, and under the pseudonym Jarl Widar, wrote for the journal *Hagal*. Wiligut's friend Richard Anders, a member of the SS, introduced him to Himmler in 1933, at a conference of the Nordic Society, after the assumption of Hitler to government. [31] Flowers does not mention any other association between Wiligut and the NSDAP prior to this and the Dorenberg association. In September 1933 Wiligut joined the SS under the name Karl Maria Wiligut-Weisthor. In November he was appointed head of the Department for Pre- and Early History at the Reich Office for Race and Settlement. In 1934 he was promoted to colonel in the *Allgemeine SS*. Flowers states that Wiligut worked as Himmler's personal adviser, and was not part of the *Ahnenerbe* (concerned with the study of ancient and ancestral history). [32] It might here be surmised that this was because Wiligut's studies were intuitive (or imaginary) and those of the *Ahnenerbe* empirical, or what Flowers calls "more objective academic standards." Wiligut's contributions to Himmler included the conceptualization of Wewelsburg Castle, where a chivalric order of SS elite would be founded as the "center of the world;" the designs for the SS *Totenkopfring*; formulation of SS ceremonies; design of ceremonial objects such as a wedding bowl, and reports on history and cosmology for Himmler. [33]



Karl Maria Wiligut was inducted into the SS (under the pseudonym "Karl Maria Weisthor") to head a Department for Pre- and Early History which was created for him within the SS Race and Settlement Main Office (RuSHA).

Photo is in Public Domain.

One of the most important aspects of Wiligut's work, states Flowers, was his composition of a series of mantras (Halgarita-Sayings) designed to open the ancestral, astral memory. [34] The efficacy of such things from an esoteric point of view is to use the conscious to evoke the unconscious memory, and beyond this, the astral or collective memory. The imagery and ideas that flow forth into the conscious beyond with such techniques would then be used to reconstruct the "Irminist" faith. Whatever one thinks of such matters, they had their counterpart not just in esoterica, but also in Jungian analytical psychology. The Jungians developed a counterpart with the concept of "active imagination," whereby one meditates on a single dream image, and allows associated images to arise spontaneously. The Jungians are also in accord with the esotericists in stating that the individual mind can tap into the collective unconscious, and here Jungians also referred to the "racial memory." It is not surprising then that Jung's "Aryan psychology" as distinct from Jewish versions such as that of Freud in particular, attracted German race-mystics. In particular there was an association between Jungianism and the German Faith Movement. [35] Jung believed that Hitler was the embodiment of Wotan as an archetype and that National Socialism unleashed the repressed atavism of the Germanic folk that had been repressed near the surface of civilization by Christianity. Jungian psychology contends that repressed traits will re-emerge somehow, and that the longer they are pent up, the more violently they will burst forth like a torrent through a broken dam. Jung hoped that Hitlerism could release the repressed atavisms in an orderly rather than in a destructive manner. That is the theme of his famous 1936 essay on "Wotan" that got him into so much trouble. Jung regarded the neo-heathen "German Faith Movement" as a preferable religion to a Germanized Christianity. [36]

Among the colleagues of Wiligut was Otto Rahn, around whom there has been much mythologizing due to his esoteric expeditions ranging from southern France to Iceland. In particular it is because Rahn was a “Luciferian,” insofar as he believed that Lucifer, the “Light-Bringer” was a good spirit in opposition to the Jewish God Jehovah. His main book was entitled *Lucifer’s Retinue: A Journey to the Good Spirits of Europe*.^[37] Not surprisingly, such a topic provides plenty of scope for writers of pop-history in attempting to portray the Third Reich as a “satanic” conspiracy or as evoking “satanic” forces. However it is a Gnostic heresy rather than Satanism, such heresies regarding Jehovah as “Satan” and Lucifer not as Satan but as an enlightened antagonist. One can see something of the doctrine in the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner, whose rather positive movement was unfortunately also banned in the Third Reich, despite Steiner’s antagonism to the same Masonic secret societies as the National Socialists.^[38] These heresies provided a fanciful basis for post-war Hitlerites such as the Chilean diplomat Miguel Serrano to develop a cosmological view of National Socialism that is “Luciferian” and Gnostic.^[39]

While those eager to see an occult influence, whether for good or evil, within the Third Reich, and in particular the SS, have uncommonly reliable information to draw from in *The Secret King*, Flowers also points out that Wiligut had important enemies within the SS, and in particular within the scholarly *Ahnenerbe*. Himmler’s chief of staff, Karl Wolff, dissolved Wiligut’s department, and he retired into oblivion in 1939. He died in 1946.^[40]

Flowers explains that Wiligut’s theology was not “Wotanism,” but what he regarded as the original religion of the Germanics, “Irmin-Kristianity.” This is similar to the theology of the most well known of the Austro-German runologists of the time, Guido von List, who also believed that “Armanism” predated the more exotic Wuotanism.” However List saw Armanism and Wuotanism as working in historical tandem, whereas Wiligut regarded Irminism and Wotanism as being engaged in an “ancestral feud.” Flowers writes that this attempt to Aryanize Christianity was quite popular among National Socialists.^[41] However, that is not to say that Wiligut was the primary or most influential proponent of Germanic Christianity. Indeed, as Steigmann-Gall points out in *The Holy Reich*, a Germanic Christianity was the primary religious influence among the National Socialists from the start of the NSDAP,^[42] not paganism, luciferianism, thelema, theosophy, or satanism. Indeed, such Orders were banned in the Third Reich as inimical to National Socialism of which the fight against Freemasonry was an aspect.



The Black Sun floor ornament in "Obergruppenfuhrer hall" of Wewelsburg in Buren. The term Black Sun (Schwarze Sonne), also referred to as the Sun Wheel (Sonnenrad), is a symbol of esoteric and occult significance.

By Schwarze_sonne.jpg: Sunnydog derivative work: Saibo (Δ) (Schwarze_sonne.jpg) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

Flowers concludes that Wiligut is the most important person in trying to establish a link between the esoteric and National Socialism. However, Flowers also states that similarities between occultists and National Socialists are more ascribable to them both being part of the same "common cultural matrix and were part of the same *Zeitgeist*." [43] Wiligut had an enduring influence primarily as the designer of the SS death's-head ring, SS rituals and aspects of Wewelsburg castle as Himmler's visualised center of a Germanic world empire. It depends as to whether one regards the influence in these matters as of notable significance. The value of most of *The Secret King* is the translation of Wiligut's texts. The first is

“The Nine Commandments of Gôt,” explaining Wiligut’s fundamental cosmology that Gôt is a “dyad” of spirit and matter, acting as a triad of Spirit, Energy and Matter in his “circulating current.” Gôt is eternal, is “cause and effect,” out of which flows “right, might, duty and happiness,” eternally generating through matter, energy and light; “beyond concepts of good and evil,” carrying the “seven epochs” of human history.[44] Much of the rest of the Wiligut documents are esoteric explanations of the runes, the evolution of the races and cosmic cycles.

Third Reich and the Occult

At a very fundamental level, much of the occult revival of the latter part of the 19th century were emanations of Freemasonry. These are universalistic and therefore antithetical to the Right. To make the situation more ambiguous, however, not all esoteric bodies emanating from Freemasonry are universalistic, and indeed some such as Crowley’s Thelema, are conservative.[45] Crowley was critical towards the Theosophical Society for example, and scathing of its attempt to foist an Indian “messiah,” Krishnamurti, on the world, calling on whites to unite against this travesty in imperialistic terms typical of the times.[46] However, Thelema fared no better under National Socialism than other occult societies.

Much has been made by some authors of an early NSDAP member, Marthe Kuntzel being a leading Thelemite in Germany. Kuntzel had indeed sought to convert Hitler, on the basis that Crowley had said that any state that adopts Thelema will master the world. Even Francis King, writing on “Nazi occultism,” rejects the idea that Kuntzel or Crowley had any influence on Hitler.[47]

It is convincingly stated that Crowley served British interests in the USA during World War I, and worked with British Intelligence during World War II.[48] With the looming advent of Hitler to office, Crowley quickly left Berlin.[49] Karl Germer, the OTO head in Germany, was arrested by the Gestapo in 1935 for disseminating the teachings of “High grade Freemason Crowley,”[50] and ended up in the USA. In 1937 all Masonic and quasi-Masonic associations were banned, including the *völkisch* followers of von List and Liebenfels.[51]

In May 1939 Crowley wrote to Kuntzel stating that Germans were well below Jews, and stood on the same level vis-à-vis monkeys to men, although he did not wish to insult monkeys. He ended: “the Hun will be wiped out.” [52] Crowley had worked with German propagandists, in particular the literary figure George Viereck in the USA during World War I for British Intelligence,[53] and was keen to offer his services against Hitler, especially since Hitler had not shown any interest in Thelema despite the efforts of Kuntzel. Crowley had also worked for Britain’s Special Branch in Berlin reporting on Communists. He worked on British propaganda during World War II, and is credited with the famous “V” for Victory sign, an occult symbol waved about merrily by Churchill et al.[54]

Christian Heresies

Professor James B. Whisker found an altogether different inspiration for elements in the Third Reich, Gnostic Christian heresies. In his *Philosophy of Alfred Rosenberg*, subtitled “Origins of the National Socialist Myth,” Whisker focuses on Rosenberg’s interest in the Cathar heresy as the means by which Christianity could be de-Judaized of what was regarded as Jewish elements introduced by the apostle Paul. For Rosenberg however what was also required was de-Romanization. Whisker comments that both the Roman and the Jewish minds had made religion into “legal formalities,” whereas for the

Germanic mind none of this was required. Martin Luther, although a folk hero, had maintained a Jewish outlook through the influence of Paul.^[55] There had been a growing movement during the 18th and 19th centuries among German Protestant theologians to remove the Old Testament from Christian theology, and Rosenberg maintained this legacy.^[56] One of the precursors of National Socialism, Richard Wagner's English son-in-law, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, racial theorist and Germanophile already well-known in Wilhelmine Germany, was among those who expounded the notion of the "Aryan Jesus," as a Galilean, not a Jew.^[57] Chamberlain was a seminal influence on Rosenberg's thinking. Although Rosenberg's influence on Hitler and the Third Reich as the "philosopher of National Socialism," is debatable, his aim of creating a "German national religion" based on Protestantism was in accord with Hitler's aim of a unified German national church, as shown by Steigmann-Gall in *The Holy Reich*.

Whisker states that in gnosticism Rosenberg found a religious opposition to the Jewish god Jehovah, regarded by Gnostics as the "demiurge" who had created a corrupt world to trap humanity's spirit in the material, while the true God was remote.^[58] Such sects included the Marcionites (ca. 2nd century A.D.), and for Rosenberg in particular the Cathars, aka Albigensians or Manichaeans (ca. 1000 A.D.)^[59] Whisker comments that again much has been spun around the Cathars in relation to the Third Reich and in particular the SS (especially through the interests of Otto Rahn) in claiming that this was a type of Gnostic "satanism."^[60] However, for their part, the Gnostics regarded Jehovah as the "devil."^[61]

Dietrich Eckart – "Satanic" mentor?

Dietrich Eckart, celebrated poet and playwright since the Wilhelmine era, was the mentor of both Alfred Rosenberg and Hitler from the start of their political activism. He has been a particular focus of those who try to portray the NSDAP as driven by dark forces. According to Trevor Ravenscroft, Eckart said on his death bed that he had initiated Hitler into the "Secret Doctrine," opened his powers of astral communication and given him the means to communicate with "the Powers." Ravenscroft does not cite a reference for this quote.^[62] Ravenscroft states that few suspected that this jovial bohemian was "a dedicated Satanist, the supreme adept of the arts and ritual of Black Magic and the central figure in a powerful and widespread circle of occultists – the Thule Group."^[63] With Rosenberg and several White Russian émigrés Eckart was supposedly the "master of ceremonies" at seances that evoked dark spirits.^[64] In a chapter discussing "The Modern Mythology of Nazi Occultism," Goodrick-Clarke shows that the legends about Eckart and the occult, and communication with dark powers, that were revived by Ravenscroft, had been previously perpetrated by Pauwels and Bergier.^[65] Despite persistent claims, Goodrick-Clarke alludes to supposed Thulists such as Eckart, Hess and Rosenberg as being nothing other than "guests" of the society, which included many other political activists from a broad range of the "Right," such as the National Liberal Party.^[66]



Hitler dedicated the second volume of Mein Kampf to Dietrich Eckart, and also named the arena near the Olympic Stadium in Berlin, now known as the Waldbühne (Forest Stage), the "Dietrich-Eckart-Bühne" when it was opened for the 1936 Summer Olympics.

By Karl Bauer [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

Ironically Eckart, the high-ranking "Satanic adept," based his world-view on a heroic interpretation of Jesus and Germany's Christian world mission. In an essay *Bolshevism from Moses to Lenin*, published posthumously in 1923, Luther is criticized for his having been influenced by Jews in his interpretation of the Old Testament and its importance in Lutheran theology.^[67] Christ was never anything other than frank with Jews, taking up the theme of Houston Stewart Chamberlain et al that Jesus was a Galilean, "from the land of the gentiles."^[68] Jesus was not tolerant towards the Jews, striking them with His whip and sharply condemning the Pharisees (the rabbinate of his day) as nothing less than the sons of the devil. The NSDAP was "defending the Christian foundations of our nation without mental reservations... But we want Germanism, we want genuine Christianity, we want order and propriety..."^[69] It was Paul

who had distorted Christianity and brought it to the Gentiles as a subversive, weakening influence.^[70] These are themes that had become increasingly widespread among German theologians and scholars during the 19th century.

Written as a dialogue between Eckart and Hitler, *Bolshevism from Moses to Lenin* refers to Hitler and himself as both being Catholics, and it is because they were that they must speak out against the Judaic spirit that infects their Church. There remained an incorruptible Catholic faith, whatever the corrupt influences that might hold sway in the Church at times. Giordano Bruno, burned at the stake, was one of those who had spoken out against Jewish influence, calling the Jews a “pestilential, leprous and publicly dangerous race.” Of the many critics of the Church in Italy at the time, why was Bruno singled out for death? Hitler responds to Eckart in this dialogue: “Rome will pull herself together, but only if we pull ourselves together first. And one day it can be said that the Church is whole again.” Eckart retorts that this will happen when the Jewish influences, which have set Christians against each other, have been purged from the Christian community. As for Protestantism, it was more heavily infiltrated than Catholicism. Eckart saw the division of the Catholic Church by Luther as a misfortune to Christendom, and a wreaking of bloody conflict among Germanic folk while the battle against the perennial Jewish influence had been deflected. Luther should have focused on the Jews subverting Catholicism, not on attacking the Church *per se*.^[71]

Steigmann-Gall quoted a passage from Eckart that I have been unable to find in the Pierce translation, in describing Christ as a leader to be emulated: “In Christ, the embodiment of all manliness, we find all that we need. And if we occasionally speak of Baldur, our words always contain some joy, some satisfaction, that our pagan ancestors were already so Christian as to have indications of Christ in this ideal figure.”^[72] That was Eckart’s final work, and was unfinished at the time of his death. Steigmann-Gall states that Eckart’s Christianity was the basis of his worldview. He saw the world war in which he had fought in dualistic terms as a fight between “Christ and Antichrist.” The post-war conflict was one between “Germandom and Jewry,” the conflict between light and darkness.^[73]

Conclusion

Whatever might be alleged or repudiated regarding the murderous character of the Third Reich, Hitler’s outlook was not that of a nihilistic, satanic apocalypse. While armaments minister Albert Speer was after the war at pains to distance himself from his ex-Führer, he noted that Hitler never encouraged a nuclear program. Hitler had no intention of setting off a course of events that might engulf the world. His scientists were not able to answer the question as to whether nuclear fission could be controlled or would set up a chain reaction. “Hitler was plainly not delighted with the possibility that the earth under his rule might be transformed into a glowing star. Occasionally, however, he joked that the scientists in their unworldly urge to lay bare all the secrets under heaven might some day set the globe on fire.”^[74] The attitude seems distinctly un-Faustian. There were limits, and from what Speer states, it seems that Hitler was not so hubristic as to wish to be another Faustus or Prometheus. From what Speer records of Hitler’s sentiments these can be seen as antithetical to that claimed by Rauschnig for example. There was no will-to-destruction, nor a Faustian/Promethean will to deny the Gods or God.

Hitler ridiculed “superstition” but recognized the role it played on the psyche, and rejected the efficacy of prophecies and of astrology.^[75] The National Socialist party, so far from being neo-heathen, as is often contended, while reviving many old Germanic customs and festivals, from the start had a wide Christian base, particularly of Lutherans, and many Lutheran pastors were officers of the SA. They held

early party meetings in their parsonages. Hitler became disillusioned with the failure of the Christian denominations to unite as a German national church, however he also remained dismissive of attempts at reviving paganism.^[76] The latter remained a peripheral influence within an inner core of the SS.

Himmler sought to create the SS as a neo-heathen order with its own marriage, birth and death ceremonies outside the Christian churches, and with SS officers serving as the priests.^[77] The Feast of Midsummer was substituted for Christmas. However, these measures that Himmler attempted to impose were so unpopular and disregarded among the SS that by November 1940 he was obliged to abrogate previous punishments for disobeying regulations on religion. Himmler was also unsuccessful in weaning his SS away from Christianity. "Two thirds of the *Allgemeine-SS* remained in the Church – 54.2 percent Evangelicals and 23.7 percent Catholics."^[78]

Notes:

- [1] Herman Rauschnig, *Hitler Speaks* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1939).
- [2] Mark Weber, "Rauschnig's Phony 'Conversations With Hitler': An Update," *The Journal of Historical Review*, Winter 1985-86, Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 499-500. http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v06/v06p499_Weber.html
- [3] Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier, *The Morning of the Magicians* (St Albans, 1971).
- [4] J.H. Brennan, *The Occult Reich* (New York: Signet Books, 1974).
- [5] Francis King, *Satan and Swastika* (Hertfordshire: Mayflower Books, 1976).
- [6] Trevor Ravenscroft, *The Spear of Destiny* (Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1982).
- [7] "Operation Werewolf," television episode, "True Blood," 2011.
- [8] J.C. Fagnon, *SS Werewolf combat instruction manual* (Boulder: Paladin Press, 1982).
- [9] Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity* (New York University Press, 2002).
- [10] Ibid, pp. 173-192.
- [11] Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Hitler's Priestess: Savitri Devi, the Hindu-Aryan Myth, and Neo-Nazism* (New York: University Press, 1998).
- [12] K.R. Bolton, "Gothic Nazi: 'Fascist' manifestations in Neo-Gothic subculture," T. Southgate, ed., *Helios: Journal of Metaphysical and Occult Studies* Vol. 1(London: Black Front Press, 2011), pp. 122-154.
- [13] Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism* (Northamptonshire: The Aquarian Press, 1985).

- [14] Ibid, pp. 220-221.
- [15] Ibid, pp. 198.
- [16] Ibid, pp. 202-203.
- [17] Stephen E. Flowers (translator), Michael Moynihan (editor), *The Secret King: Karl Maria Wiligut – Himmler’s Lord of the Runes* (Vermont: Dominion Press, 2001).
- [18] Ibid, “Preface.”
- [19] Ibid.
- [20] Ibid.
- [21] Ibid, pp. 22.
- [22] Ibid, pp. 32.
- [23] Ibid, pp. 16-17.
- [24] Theosophical Society, ‘Objects’, <http://www.ts-adyar.org/content/objects>
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Author(s) :	Kerry R. Bolton
Title:	Religion, Mysticism and the Myth of the "Occult Reich"
Sources:	<i>Inconvenient History</i> , vol. 7, no. 4, Winter 2015/16
Dates:	published: 2015-11-25, first posted: 2015-11-27 15:51:46

<http://inconvenienthistory.com/7/4/3855>